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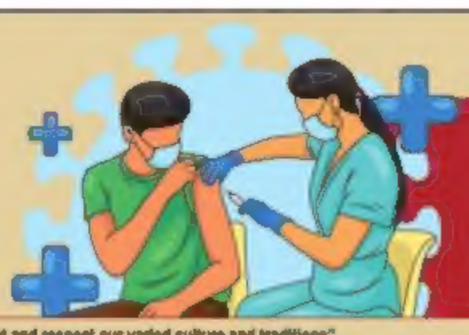
COURT ORDERS SURVEY AT KASHI TEMPLE SITE

A Varanasi court on Thursday ordered a survey of Kashi Vishwanath temple and Gyanvapi Mosque complex by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The court further directed the Uttar Pradesh government to bear the cost of the survey. The ASI is likely to set up a five-member team that will visit the campus soon. The court also stipulated that at least two members of the archaeologist team should be from the minority community. P9



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"To protect and respect our varied culture and traditions" -is the fundamental duty of every Citizen of our Country. Enshrined in the Constitution

karnataka information Department of Information and Public Relations

No national lockdown: PM

Micro-containment zones should be considered, says Modi

MANISH ANAND @ New Delhi

DISAPPROVING of political blame game over vaccine availability and rejecting rumours of a lockdown, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged chief ministers on Thursday to focus on testing, tracking and treating, besides suggesting micro-containment zones as the strategy to deal with the rising Covid-19 cases. Amid widespread rumours on a fresh lockdown, Modi said states should work on local micro-containment zones instead and proactively test all asymptomatic cases.

"Lockdown, as a strategy, worked last year when enough facilities and means to contain the Covid-19 cases weren't available. Now, we have much better health infrastructure, including testing labs, and also the vaccines along with experiences," he said and advised that the night curfews be called "Corona curfews" for better awareness of the people to follow the Covid-19 protocols.

In the backdrop of the Maharashtra government and the Centre engaging in a slugfest over the availability of vaccines, Modi said he didn't want to get into vaccine politics.

CONTINUED ON: P9

GOVT NIXES MYSURU DC's ORDER

Hours after Mysuru DC Rohini Sindhuri announced that RT-PCR negative reports were mandatory to visit tourist places, resorts, clubs and theatres in the city, as well as another advisory for travellers from Bengaluru, the State Government struck it down. The Principal Secretary to the Revenue Department issued an order stating that such matters will be decided by the government. P3

10 pm-5 am curfew in 7 cities from tomorrow

ANUSHA RAVI @ Bengaluru

AS if sounding a warning bell, with the number of Covid-19 cases increasing by the day, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Thursday announced night curfew between 10 pm and 5 am, for 10 days in seven district headquarters. The decision came after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his video conference with chief ministers of various states, suggested that 'corona curfew' was an effective way to curb the spread of the pandemic. Karnataka, which had held off so far, has joined the likes of Punjab, Maharashtra and New Delhi to announce night curfew in a few cities.

Starting Saturday, the night curfew will be enforced in the district headquarters of Bengaluru city, Mysuru city, Tumakuru city, Udupi-Manipal, Mangaluru city, Bidar city and Kalaburagi city.

CONTINUED ON: P4

	APRIL 8	APRIL 7
Cases	6,570	6,976
Deaths	36	35
Recoveries	2,393	2,794

- Karnataka registers 53,395 active cases. The last time it crossed the 50,000-mark was in November, 2020
- At 4.65 per cent, the day's positivity rate has remained the same since Wednesday

Vaccine shortage grips some states

Beneficiaries argue with officials outside a closed Covid-19 vaccination centre in Mumbai after the jab went out of stock on Thursday | PTI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

SHORTAGE of Covid-19 vaccines has forced 60 vaccination centres across Maharashtra to shut — 27 in Mumbai alone. Satara, Sangali, Gondia and Panvel stopped vaccination on Thursday. The state had received 1.4 crore doses, of which just 9 lakh are left now. The Centre has announced 7.5 lakh more doses.

In Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad, people were reportedly turned away by hospitals, citing unavailability of vaccines.

Odisha has also reported acute shortage of doses. On Thursday alone, as many as 670 vaccination centres downed shutters due to the scarcity. On Wednesday, 692 centres were closed.

However, the situation is fairly better in southern states, except in Andhra, where the vaccine stock will last only for the next two days. Other southern states have stock for over 10 days.

CONTINUED ON: P9

MIXED FEELINGS: IPL BEGINS

With Chennai gearing up to host the first match of the 14th edition of IPL, here's a look at a few talking points...

Unlike any other season

Hosting a two month tournament where there is going to be frequent travelling amid a pandemic will challenge every administration. BCCI pulled it off in UAE. Can they repeat it?

Lacking buzz

The IPL in India is akin to a festival. But that usual atmosphere is lacking. In 2020, the IPL acted as the great distraction. In 2021, it's second in six months, can it have the same effect?

On-field matters

For players, though, this tournament is perhaps the most important one of the year. Impress selectors and they could be in with a shout of representing their countries at the T20 World Cup | P15

EXPRESS READ

SC rejects pleas of Anil Deshmukh, Maha Govt against CBI probe

New Delhi: In a setback to the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maharashtra government and its former home minister Anil Deshmukh, the Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed their pleas challenging the Bombay High Court order directing a CBI probe into allegations of corruption levelled against him by former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh. P10

Fresh India, China disengagement talks to be held today

MAYANK SINGH AND PUSHKAR BANAKAR @ New Delhi

A day ahead of the 11th round of Sino-Indian Corps Commander-level talks, there was quiet optimism on the Indian side of some movement forward on further disengagement at friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh.

A senior Army officer said, "We are hopeful of some positive outcome. The talks will begin at 10.30 am tomorrow."

In Bejing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian refused to be drawn into committing that India's demand of restoring status quo as of April 2020 would be on the talks table. "That is something for the two sides to discuss," he said. April 2020 refers to the pre-incursion situation along the LAC.

His Indian counterpart Arindam Bagchi said India would like disengagement in remaining areas of friction. "This will provide us the atmosphere of improving bilateral ties," he said.

The last round of talks was held on February 19 at Moldo on the Chinese side of the LAC, immediately after full disengagement from all friction points at Pangong Tso. Both sides had pulled back their heavy artillary and troops on both the north and south banks of the Pangong lake in a phased, coordinated and verified manner a few weeks ago.

The stand-off, however, continues at Depsang, Gogra, Hot Spring, and in the Charding Ninglung Nallah track junction in the Demchok sector.

CRPF jawan Rakeshwar Singh Manhas, who was released on Thursday after a Maoist jan adalat at Pamed in Chhattisgarh | PTI

Maoists free abducted commando

SANA SHAKIL AND EJAZ KAISER @ New Delhi/Raipur

WHEN an abducted CRPF commando walked free after five days in Maoist captivity on Thursday, his release was as much due to the intervention of mediators as to the crucial role played by local journalists in the conflict zone of Bastar. The CoBRA commando, Rakeshwar Singh Manhas, reached the paramilitary's Tarrem camp riding pillion on the bike of a journalist, who along with his six colleagues, had reached the site of a *jan adaalat* in the Maoist stronghold of Pamed, around 450 km south of th state capital Raipur.

Sources said Manhas was released around 4:30 pm in the presence of social workers Dharampal Saini and Gondwana Samaj chief Gelam Boraiya, and hundreds of villagers. Of the 11 people who had gone to secure Manhas' release, seven were local journalists. This is not the first time that journalists have successfully negotiated the safe return of security personnel. CONTINUED ON: P10

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